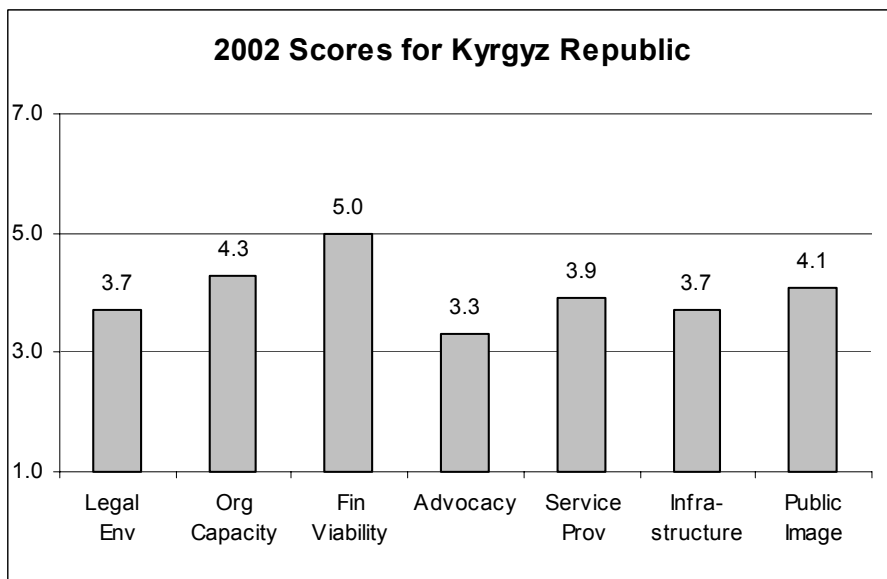


## KYRGYZ REPUBLIC



**Capital:**  
Bishkek

**Polity:**  
Presidential

**Population:**  
4,822,166

**GDP per capita  
(PPP):** \$2,800

### NGO SUSTAINABILITY: 4.0

NGOs in Kyrgyzstan continue to benefit from the most favorable situation in all of

#### NGO SUSTAINABILITY

2002	4.0
2001	4.3
2000	4.3
1999	4.1
1998	3.9

Central Asia, but the sector remains highly dependent on the foreign donor community due to the scarcity of financial resources in the

country. However, because the Kyrgyz government lacks the resources it needs to address all of the social and economic problems facing the country, it has become increasingly supportive of NGOs that work in the field of social services. President Akayev has even been quoted as saying, "as Holland has tulips, Kyrgyzstan has NGOs." While the government has not been as supportive of politically engaged NGOs, this year it did invite the leaders of some political NGOs to partake in a "Constitutional Council" that dis-

cussed potential amendments to the constitution.

These evolving government attitudes have led the NGO sector to become more confident and active in both the political and social arenas. In fact, many NGOs are better organized and equipped than most political parties. The increasing maturity of the NGO community in the country was demonstrated through its collaborative advocacy campaign against "Decree # 20," which called for increased government control over all forms of media.

There is, however, still need for further development within the NGO sector. Aside from problems of sustainability, most NGOs still lack the professionalism needed to truly become partners with the government. In order to reach the next stage of development, NGOs require increased organizational capacity, advocacy skills, and professionalism.

## LEGAL ENVIRONMENT: 3.7

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In comparison with other Central Asian countries, NGO registration in Kyrgyzstan is relatively easy and affordable. Further-

### LEGAL ENVIRONMENT

2002	3.7
2001	5.2
2000	4.3
1999	3.5
1998	3.9

more, legislation passed in the country over the last several years has made it easier for NGOs to operate without extensive government interference. In

2002, several pieces of legislation were adopted that further support NGO development. The laws "On the Ombudsman" and "On Public Meetings" have created more opportunities for NGOs to voice their interests to both the public and government. Furthermore, the laws "On Microfinance" and "On Associations of Water Us-

ers" have both provided clearer definitions of the responsibilities, rights, and roles of specific types of NGOs. Finally, proposed amendments to the tax code could, in the near future, significantly lower the tax burden on NGOs, and on charitable organizations in particular. In addition, implementation of previously existing legislation has improved, and as NGOs increase their familiarity and understanding of these provisions, they are able to ensure that their rights under it are upheld. For these reasons, there was a significant improvement of this score in comparison with last year.

## ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY: 4.3

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The organizational capacity within the Kyrgyz NGO sector has also been steadily improving over

### ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

2002	4.3
2001	4.0
2000	4.0
1999	4.0
1998	3.9

the past several years. Particularly among the older NGOs that have been operating for years, true organizations are beginning to develop where sin-

gle leaders once reigned over a staff of two or three. While this is a positive development, the sector is struggling with grow-

ing pains as it converts from a dispersed group of "Non-Governmental Individuals" to actual "Non-Governmental Organizations." In order to consolidate this process, additional training is needed in areas including strategic planning, corporate management, team building and leadership. Weak organizational capacity often translates into poor professionalism, especially among NGOs that could otherwise assist in the preparation of draft laws, national advocacy programs, and the assessment of government and donor implementation of social projects.

## FINANCIAL VIABILITY: 5.0

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Most NGOs in the country rely almost exclusively on external funding from foreign

### FINANCIAL VIABILITY

2002	5.0
2001	5.5
2000	5.5
1999	5.5
1998	4.2

donors. This is primarily a function of two factors. First, the country's economy remains weak and lacks a significant number of large companies that

could provide donations to NGOs. Furthermore, the present tax regime does not encourage such public-private

partnerships. Second, the government is resource-limited and therefore cannot yet support NGOs either through grants or tenders for social services. While NGOs in the country are still reliant on international donor support, the passing this year of a new law "On Microfinance" gives some organizations hope that they can combine microcredit lending into their programs and, consequently, improve the sustainability of their organizations.

## ADVOCACY: 3.3

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While NGOs engaged in some successful

### ADVOCACY

2002	3.3
2001	3.0
2000	3.5
1999	3.5
1998	3.5

advocacy campaigns over the past year, NGOs still need to develop their advocacy skills further. The most successful advocacy campaign of the

year was focused on revoking the restrictive amendments to the Media Law introduced by "Decree #20", which

was supported by NGOs throughout the country. Despite the success of this campaign, NGOs still recognize the need to improve the professionalism of NGO representatives if they are to seriously advocate for change before the government. Specifically, NGOs need to improve their expertise in their respective fields and to master the skills needed to effectively present their cases to government representatives.

## SERVICE PROVISION: 3.9

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### SERVICE PROVISION

2002	3.9
2001	4.3
2000	4.5
1999	4.0

Many NGOs in Krygyzstan are competent service providers, and NGOs note that government support for their efforts to provide services has increased.

At the same time, however, the government often seems to expect NGOs to assume government responsibilities. For example, the government's recent poverty reduction plan tends to depend on NGOs to deliver services without providing any financial support to organizations for this work.

**INFRASTRUCTURE: 3.7**

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**INFRASTRUCTURE**

2002	3.7
2001	3.8
2000	4.0
1999	4.5

There are now eleven USAID-funded Civil Society Support Centers located throughout the country that provide training, consultation, information,

and resources on fundraising. This network of resource centers was instrumental in the NGO community's recent advocacy campaign against the government's proposed amendments to the Media Law. Internet access has also increased significantly throughout the country, which improves NGO access to information.

**PUBLIC IMAGE: 4.1**

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**PUBLIC IMAGE**

2002	4.1
2001	4.5
2000	4.5
1999	4.0
1998	3.8

While government appreciation of NGOs has increased, public opinion of NGOs remains skeptical. The perception remains that NGOs

can easily obtain grant money from foreign donors, and that this money is not always spent as it was intended. This is aggravated by a general distrust of foreign assistance. In fact, many Kyrgyz believe that international organizations are only encouraging the government to go into more and more serious debt.